

Human Resources

Nationally and worldwide, there is increasing awareness of renewable energy and interest in related initiatives. The viability of commercial applications for renewable energy is increasing, and the number of successful examples is growing. More than ever, NREL employees are feeling the urgent importance of achieving the NREL vision and mission.

At NREL's Human Resources Center (HRC), the ongoing focus is on helping NREL staff support our vision and mission. On a macro level, HRC is continuously working with NREL leadership to identify how the vision and mission can be better supported by our people, systems, and tools—such

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as those related to recruiting, retention, training, and development. On another level, HRC staff are involved with the detailed administration of existing human resource systems and programs, including compensation, employee benefits, database maintenance, equal employment opportunity assurance, and more.

While the NREL vision and mission have remained constant over time, organizational change is continuous. NREL's human resource systems and programs must adapt to support these changes, a few of which are detailed below.

- NREL has fewer employees than in past years. The human resource challenge is to help ensure that existing and new staff are appropriately deployed, motivated, and focused on those things that best support NREL's vision and mission.
- NREL is a "flatter" organization than in the past. For human resources, the challenge is to ensure that compensation levels are appropriate and that the value once placed on "reporting relationships" is now placed on more appropriate factors.
- As commercialization of renewable energy technologies becomes more viable, so does NREL's need for related skills and experience. The challenge for human resources is to identify and recruit professionals with expertise critical to our changing organization.

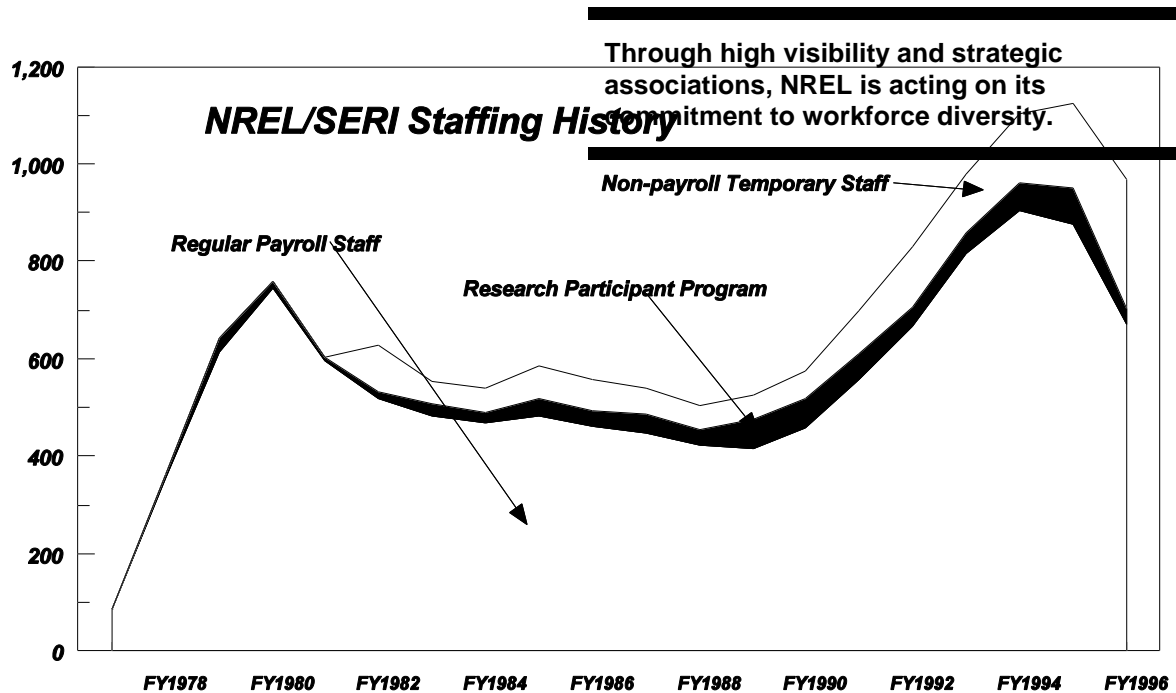
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As for other organizations, change is commonplace at NREL, and the HRC staff members are committed to addressing the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities that changes present for NREL human resources.

Employment and Recruiting Programs

At the end of FY 1996, there were about 646 full-time and part-time regular employees, 28 research participants (post docs) on payroll, and 29 NREL temporary employees, for a total of about 702 on the payroll. In addition, the Laboratory supported onsite about 220 persons who were not on the payroll, including visiting researchers and graduate students, leased workers, and other contractors. A breakdown of NREL staff disciplines is shown in the following table (full-time and part-time regular employees only; does not include research participants or non-payroll persons). NREL's staffing history is shown in the graph below, for three categories: regular payroll staff, research participants on payroll, and all other non-payrolled (temporary) staff.

NREL Staff Disciplines	Percentage of Regular Employees
Engineers	16%
Physical and life scientists	20%
Other scientists	11%
Technical support (graphics, photography, editing, and publishing)	11%
Technicians	11%
Other disciplines (management, administrative, and administrative support)	31%



Everything our organization is and does depends on the individuals who embody NREL. For HRC, our plan calls for the identification and recruitment of highly specialized professionals with expertise not currently represented on the staff, yet critical to fulfillment of NREL's vision and mission. Increasing competition with other national laboratories entering the renewable energy industry makes effective recruitment and retention simultaneously more important and more difficult. Working closely with NREL's managers, HRC will continue an aggressive college recruiting program, in addition to targeted recruiting for experienced and skilled individuals.

Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity

NREL has a longstanding and active EEO program. We continue to develop outreach programs that attract women and minorities for employment, and to review our policies with the objective of increasing our ability to attract older, experienced individuals. Through high visibility and strategic associations, NREL is acting on its commitment to workforce diversity.

NREL Employment Diversity as of September 1996				
	Male	Female	Non-Minority	Minority
NREL Staff				
	65%	35%	86%	14%
Management Diversity - Research Managers				
	90%	10%	86%	14%
Management Diversity - Administrative Managers				
	68%	32%	86%	14%

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American
Management Diversity - Minority Staff Composition				
	9%	5%	0%	0%

The Laboratory's projected employment levels underscore the importance of diversity maintenance programs to ensure that current and anticipated gains are not eroded. HRC has implemented and maintains affirmative-action recruiting programs, staff-sponsored language art skills programs, cultural diversity awareness activities, and seminars to showcase cultural and ethnic foods, lifestyles, and customs. These activities are designed to increase staff understanding of workforce diversity and enhance our competitive position in recruiting efforts.

Compensation and Benefits

HRC is continuously monitoring our compensation and benefits costs and practices to ensure that NREL maintains an appropriate balance of costs and competitiveness.

The Laboratory's salary administration program, being revised in FY 1997, is designed to ensure that base pay is related directly to competitive levels. The program serves as a new foundation for NREL's pay system—a foundation on which NREL will build over the coming years. The new NREL compensation system presents the Laboratory with new capabilities for ensuring that employees understand their roles in fulfilling our vision and mission, and that performance is competitively compensated.

In past years, HRC and NREL teams made great strides in developing employee benefits that are both cost efficient and highly competitive. By 2001, HRC and teams of NREL employees will work together to develop more appropriate career management tools to better define success in our less hierarchical organization and a new performance management system to redefine "performance" and how it is measured and rewarded at NREL.

Training and Staff Development

Training and staff development have continued to be a high priority at NREL. The Laboratory constantly evaluates staff skills and assesses training needs. The Training and Services Section provides educational programs and services to meet those needs, including an ever-growing assortment of computer-based training tools and courses. Each employee's training plan and history are tracked on-line to provide managers with the information they need.

As NREL changes, the skills and experience required among employees is also changing. Recently, an NREL training review group "realigned" management's short- and long-range goals and priorities with training objectives and training curriculum development. The resulting Training Long-Range Plan provides a systematic blueprint for ensuring that NREL's current training needs are being met and that, as NREL changes, training curricula will have changed in stride.